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New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): Allow me to add my congratulations to those already addressed to you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee, and to express my confidence that under your skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with the important issues on the agenda of the Committee. I would also like to extend my felicitations to other members of the Bureau.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and also to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive and detailed statements on various disarmament and international security issues.

The current session of the First Committee is being held at a crucial time, when the dust from the completely destroyed World Trade Center towers in New York has still not settled and the pain of those who lost friends and relatives has not yet eased. During the plenary meetings of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the agenda item "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", I expressed my country's deep condolences to the President, the Government and the people of the United States of America, and I reiterate my profound sympathy to them. The unbelievable acts of violence committed in the United States on 11 September deeply shocked not only people in America but people all over the world. We intimately sensed the pain of Americans as being our grief, too, because a citizen of my country is among the missing victims of the terrible terrorist attack. She was only 32 years old, and was very happy to go to work as an accountant for a company located in one of the world's tallest buildings. As *The New York Times* of 30 October 2001 said,

> "On September 11 at 9 a.m., Zhanetta Tsoy's life was to begin anew. It was Day 1 of a new job in a new country, a place where she and her husband believed their futures were as big and bright as the New York skyline ... Her husband ...said she was 'very hurried' when she left for her first morning of work ... 'Zhanetta wanted very much to make a good start.' In the days since the tower collapsed, [her husband] has looked for the words to explain the disaster to their daughter".

I think that this terrible event will cast its shadow over our deliberations during the work of the First Committee, and I hope that united we will manage to resolve all the problems ahead.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, despite the successful conclusion of the May 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), progress in

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this area has been limited. We proved our adherence to the process of freeing the world from nuclear weapons by joining the NPT in 1993 as a non-nuclear State. After the withdrawal of the last nuclear warheads from our territory, in April 1995, and the elimination of the remaining nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, on 31 May 1995, we became a State that voluntary refused to possess nuclear weapons. As a party to the NPT Treaty, Kazakhstan is firmly committed to the non-proliferation regime and calls on all States to adhere to this Treaty.

Proceeding from the necessity to fully strengthen the non-proliferation regime, we signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, and continue to make practical contributions to efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring of compliance with the CTBT. It is the strong intention of my Government to ratify the Treaty before the forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, through a letter to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, expressed this desire of my Government.

We consider the International Conference entitled "The Twenty-first Century: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", which was held in Almaty on 29 to 30 August of this year, one of the practical contributions to the matter of nuclear disarmament. The Final Memorandum of that Conference, circulated as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, stresses,

> "Despite differences in political views and the varying levels of economic development and technological possibilities in their countries, the participants in this conference are united in their eagerness to create a safer world and to make the process of non-proliferation irreversible. We call for humanity to use its scientific and technological capabilities not for mutual threats or one another's destruction, but instead to place them in the service of further peaceful development, progress, and human prosperity." (A/56/348, annex, sixth paragraph)

In this regard, I can not but mention the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Ishikawa-Kanazawa, entitled "The Asian Pacific Region: Evolution of the scope of security and disarmament in the twenty-first century", which was held in Kanazawa, Japan, under the auspices of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, between 28 and 31 August, where I participated, and which is another practical step in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and public education.

Kazakhstan's ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems on 11 July of this year is one more step towards strengthening the country's status as a full member of this Treaty. My country will support all efforts aimed at the preservation of and compliance with this Treaty, which is a cornerstone for maintaining global peace, security, strategic stability and for promoting further strategic nuclear arms reduction.

Disarmament is facing difficult times now, and challenges existed well before the tragic events of 11 September. The symptoms of the crisis, clearly seen in the pattern of the Conference on Disarmament, are subjects of concern to my country. As a full member of the only multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, Kazakhstan is in favour of the earliest possible start to negotiations, especially on fissile materials, which is very important for realization of the NPT provisions.

There are other types of weapons of mass destruction that, along with nuclear weapons, pose no lesser degree of danger, if not more, especially in the current situation. That is why it is vitally important not only to eliminate the old weapons of mass destruction but also to establish a control mechanism to prevent the development of new types of such weapons. In 1993 we signed, and in 1999 we ratified, the Chemical Weapons Convention with the purpose of strengthening the international regime of non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We will be strongly committed to its obligations.

Kazakhstan also fully supports the humanitarian orientation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and strictly abides by a unilateral moratorium on the export, including re-export and transit, of anti-personnel landmines, as declared by the Government of Kazakhstan in 1994.

Transparency in the field of control and reduction of conventional arms provides a good basis for preventing a destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region or an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Our country has provided information on a regular basis since 1992 and considers the Register to be a most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of Member States of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument. In this regard, while the Programme of Action adopted during the recently held United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects did not fully meet the expectations of all countries, we reiterate our readiness to undertake all bilateral, regional and international cooperation actions to ensure its implementation.

We attach great attention to the realization of the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which will constitute an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and towards promoting general and complete disarmament. Kazakhstan will further continue to participate consistently and constructively in the work being carried out to establish this zone. In this regard, we highly appreciate the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which is an effective instrument in helping to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region.

In view of the unique situation, we also consider positive the contribution of Mongolia to the process of general and complete disarmament, and we fully support its tireless efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

My country continues to work on the implementation of the initiative put forward by the President of Kazakhstan at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992 on the convening of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). This initiative is taking real shape and becoming a tangible factor in contemporary international life. On 16 November of this year, heads of State and Government are expected to sign the Almaty Act, the final document of this regional forum, which reflects major aspects of cooperation: joint activities to combat new threats, including terrorism, separatism, extremism, illegal drugs and weapon trafficking; a regional mechanism for the elaboration and application of confidence-building mechanisms in their broader meaning; the institutionalization of the CICA, its structure, Secretariat, regular and specialized meetings, and academic and professional inputs.

We are convinced that the CICA initiative has a rational kernel and corresponds with the ideas and tasks of the United Nations. It is obvious that the variety of declared targets will demand close cooperation and interaction in terms of solving the security problems in the vast region of Asia, especially in the current situation.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to support the hope expressed in your opening statement "that in the extraordinary circumstances prevailing at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, all of us will make genuine efforts to come to grips with the many crucial security challenges of our time". (A/C.1/56/PV.3)

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, allow me to associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you most warmly on your election to preside over the First Committee. I wish you every success. I also wish to congratulate the Vice-Chairman and the other members of the Bureau, who, indeed, are also eminently qualified. We are sure that, thanks to your leadership and the cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, our work will be crowned with success.

My delegation will do its best to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves here. I would also like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the commendable efforts that he has been making on this issue. We also wish to thank him for his comprehensive statement of last Monday, during which he raised various issues on the programme of work of the First Committee. We also wish him every success.

The tragic events of last 11 September in New York and Washington shocked the entire world. Those events will remain engraved in the collective memory of humankind for they incarnate a loss of humaneness. These are incredible acts that are inadmissible in our civilization. We had believed that the destruction caused by these terrorist acts was limited to the lethal effect of the weapons, but the reality is that such terrorist acts can destroy the safety and security of cities. We should like to extend our most sincere

condolences to the American Government and people and to the bereaved families.

As we have done at previous sessions of the First Committee, we all aspire to an ideal world, free from armed conflict and nuclear waste, a world which would have total control over all types of weapons, a world in which nuclear tests do not occur and in which nuclear weapons would be neither produced nor stockpiled.

All of us here aspire to a transparent world in which efforts at disarmament and the creation of a nuclear-free world are successful. We also hope to see, each in their continent, an end to all weapons of mass destruction. We pay tribute to the African continent, which has become a model of a nuclear-weapon-free zone through its ban on the production and stockpiling of all nuclear weapons. We hope that the international community will make every effort to convince those States that still possess military arsenals to join other members of the international community in acceding to the relevant treaties, in particular those on weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

It is regrettable that to date, despite appeals from the international community to control these deadly weapons and prevent their spread, some developed States are continuing to build up their arsenals and to modernize them through modern technology, which is used to create weapons that are even more deadly. It is a matter for regret that this arms race, which could wipe out human civilization, is continuing. This is a particular concern given the difficulty of preventing such weapons from falling into the hands of dangerous gangs and terrorist groups and the fact that reports on the disappearance of such weapons come out occasionally.

My delegation believes that the best way to prevent the arms race is to resolve political problems throughout the world and convince the parties to a conflict to settle their disputes peacefully and expeditiously in order to avoid the worst possible scenario. Lack of confidence and fear of other States are factors that prompt States to acquire weapons. Although the settlement of political conflict is always difficult, we hope that a consolidation of confidence among Governments can be achieved. We believe that those countries that have the power to do so must bring their weight to bear in the resolution of conflicts. States must also be linked by solid economic and social ties, since that provides a means of building peace and security among States. The tighter the economic ties, the tighter the political links.

Qatar is resolutely dedicated to the Charter of the United Nations and to legislation to ban proliferation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We have therefore signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We urge all States that have not yet done so to accede to these conventions in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We support the efforts of the international community to deal with the issue of anti-personnel landmines, which are time bombs and continue to pose problems over long periods of time. The international conferences convened to study this problem attest to the serious nature of the problem of mines which may be triggered at any time. Qatar was one of the first States to sign the Convention.

Qatar continues to urge the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. That hope remains far from being fulfilled, since just one State — Israel — will not respect this principle. To date is has refused to accede to and sign the relevant treaties and conventions, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We appeal to the international community to exert pressure on Israel so that it will place its nuclear installations under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. All the States of the region would be negatively affected by the consequences of a nuclear explosion. The media has made us aware of the dangers of nuclear radiation leaks. We therefore urge the international community to consider this problem and to contribute to a settlement to ensure stability and balance in this region, which could explode at any moment.

Mr. Chong (Singapore): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to as Chairman. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will be able to bring our work to an efficient and effective conclusion.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-

General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and his team, for their dedicated support for our work.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered two days ago by Myanmar on behalf of the States members of ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations. We would also like to express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of the 11 September attacks. We condemn such acts of terrorism, and we join other delegations in reaffirming our support for the important resolutions passed by the General Assembly and the Security Council against terrorism.

Even as we welcome the new spirit of international cooperation against terrorism, we believe that there is a need to reflect upon recent events and to see what lessons we can learn. Prior to 11 September, most people would not have imagined fuel-laden passenger aircraft being converted into flying bombs and used to such devastating impact. Convenient airport check-ins and commercially available flight instruction made it easier for the perpetrators to carry out their acts. The misuse of crop dusters, as well as licenses to transport hazardous materials, are other chilling elements that might have formed part of the dark plans of the terrorists. In short, we saw how everyday objects and processes could be used not for their original, intended purposes, but as deadly tools of terror. There is a law of unintended consequences at work here.

Likewise, we need to be mindful of unintended consequences in the field of disarmament. Disarmament is much more complex than many would like to admit. As we all know, disarmament treaties can have wide-ranging and long-lasting consequences. Once concluded, disarmament treaties are not easily revoked. We therefore need to exercise due diligence to ensure that the measures we put in place today and their consequences do not end up undermining our security needs in the longer term.

I should like to illustrate this point by recalling a fable told by Sir Winston Churchill more than 70 years ago. Once upon a time, the animals in the zoo decided to have disarmament talks. The rhinoceros wanted to prohibit teeth, but he argued that horns were defensive and should be allowed. He was supported by the buffalo, the stag and even the porcupine. But the tiger, the lion and the whole tribe of cats took a different view. They said teeth and claws were honourable weapons of immemorial antiquity and should be preserved. Then the bear spoke and proposed that both teeth and horns should be banned. In fact, it would be quite enough if animals could give each other a friendly hug to resolve their quarrels. He said no one could object to that fraternal gesture. But all the other animals were very offended by this suggestion. The discussion got very heated and angry, and the animals soon forgot about all the peaceful intentions that had brought them together in the first place. Fortunately, the zookeepers arrived and were able to persuade the animals to return to their cages. And the interesting thing is: before long, the animals began to feel quite friendly towards one another once again.

Times may have changed, but the truths contained in this little tale are still relevant today. Naturally, we support the use of multilateral frameworks to regulate disarmament efforts. But we need to understand that successful arms control is not simply a matter of "less equals best". Recent events have reminded us that we live in an unpredictable world, and we need to prepare for unthinkable eventualities. While we all share a vision of a world free from the scourge of war and deadly weaponry, this is, sadly, an ideal that will not be realized soon.

So long as we live in an imperfect world, there is still the need for States to defend themselves. This right to self-defence cannot be compromised. Forcing a less-is-best fix onto an inappropriate set of circumstances can upset an existing balance and undermine the very security we intend to promote and the very confidence we seek to build. And sometimes, horns, teeth and cages are necessary defences in order to maintain peace and harmony.

At the same time, we must realize that disarmament cannot be conducted in a vacuum but is inextricably linked to the prevailing security environment. Without the requisite conditions for security, including socio-economic development, it is impossible for disarmament efforts to bring forth genuine fruits of peace. Moreover, just as the bear, the tiger and the rhinoceros are very different creatures in Churchill's story, so too are the nations of the world. Disarmament efforts conducted in isolation, without adequate regard for the particular differences between States' historical experiences and contexts, will not lead to greater confidence. Worse, they may even undermine security.

Should we then cease our disarmament negotiations? Certainly not. But we need to adopt a more thoughtful and considered approach to our work. We could surely benefit from a more flexible approach, as unexpected events, like what we witnessed last month, can easily alter all our strategic considerations. Following the tragic events of 11 September, should all States that have commercial airliners overflying their territory also invest in fighter jets capable of escorting, and if necessary, bringing down airliners converted into guided missiles? This is an exaggeration, but the point remains: we have to be flexible and be prepared to challenge our existing security paradigms.

In the same vein, we need to go about our deliberations in a more comprehensive manner. Therefore, we cannot be fixated only on the trendy disarmament issues of the day, but must realign our priorities to focus on the difficult, yet critical issues of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and non-proliferation. We do not doubt that these are thorny issues. Some processes, like nuclear disarmament, have bedevilled negotiators for decades. Others, such as the accession of all countries to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), as well as the establishment of a verification protocol for the BWC, remain unfinished. Nevertheless, the potential for massive casualties in just one strike by a weapon or weapons of mass destruction, especially if such weapons are acquired by terrorists or extremists, makes it imperative for us to persevere. In this regard, we join others in urging the redoubling of efforts towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

As I conclude, let us remind ourselves to re-examine our approaches to disarmament. Let us not look for quick fixes, which may carry inadvertent consequences, but for truly enduring solutions to complex problems. We are here to help make the world a safer place — a world where we do not need to live in insecurity or in fear of instant annihilation. We have all been reminded that the world we live in and the peace that we desire are both extremely fragile. Let us keep that thought in our minds as we embark on the task ahead.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that your vast experience and diplomatic skills will guide our work to a successful conclusion. Our congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you that you can count on the cooperation of my delegation. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive statement, which is very helpful to our deliberations.

We are meeting against the background of the terrorist attacks of 11 September that caused thousands of deaths in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Our sympathies go to all the victims and our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of the United States of America.

Once again, we condemn these attacks in the strongest terms. Having suffered a terrorist attack in 1998 by the same terrorist group, Tanzania joins the international community in its fight against terrorism. We believe that since terrorism has no race, religion or nationality it is imperative that the international community coordinate its actions so it can be able to dismantle and neutralize the terrorists and their activities.

Let me now turn to the agenda item under discussion. Nuclear disarmament remains one of the highest priorities of the international community. Nuclear weapons, by their power of destruction, continue to pose the gravest danger to human existence and its civilization. It is regrettable, however, that the outlook for such disarmament in the near future remains bleak. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, including a lack of commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time frame. Furthermore, the continued reliance on the doctrine of deterrence by nuclear-weapon States is contributory.

The process of bilateral nuclear disarmament is at a standstill, as no progress is being made. Although the START II Treaty was fully ratified more than a year ago, no appreciable efforts are being made for the initiation of START III.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the future of the non-proliferation regime hangs in the balance. We had hoped that the Conference would give a new momentum to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This was after nuclear-weapon States had made an unequivocal

undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is disappointing that these commitments have not been translated into action or even a promise to act.

We call on the nuclear-weapon States to gather the necessary political will to seriously implement the 13 steps as agreed to in the Final Document of the Conference.

Tanzania's position on negative security assurances has remained consistent. We believe that such assurances are essential steps pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, we once again call on nuclear-weapon States to embark on negotiations leading to legally binding arrangements to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States concerned. Today more than a hundred countries are covered by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. Not only are those Treaties consistent with efforts towards global disarmament, but they also serve as instruments for strengthening peace and security.

We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones will continue to play a big role in achieving the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. In this connection, we support efforts being made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In the same vein, we support Mongolia's declaration of a single-State nuclear-weapon free zone.

My country attaches great importance to the eradication of other weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical and biological weapons. We commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are concerned, however, by financial constraints facing the OPCW stemming from the failure by some States parties to pay their contributions on time. We urge all parties to give the OPCW the necessary support, including payment of their assessed contributions, to enable it to discharge its obligations as mandated.

The failure by the Ad Hoc Committee to reach consensus on strengthening the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is regrettable and disappointing, particularly after more than six years of negotiations. It is our hope that the BWC Review Conference scheduled for later this year will salvage the draft protocol.

Tanzania shares the concern of the international community about the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. These weapons continue to cause great suffering to innocent civilians, particularly women and children. In addition, small arms play a big role in terrorism, drug trafficking, common and organized crime and other criminal actions. We are pleased to note the global awareness about the problem and the efforts being made at all levels in the international arena to combat small arms.

In this regard, the adoption of a Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001, is welcome. We believe that this is a big step on the long road towards a world free of the scourge of small arms.

Despite these positive developments, my delegation wishes to emphasize the importance and urgency of prohibiting the supply of such weapons to non-State actors.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, my delegation welcomes the Managua Declaration, adopted by the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. Indeed, the achievements recorded since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention are clear testimony that words can be matched with deeds.

It is gratifying to note that a considerable amount of land has been cleared of anti-personnel mines and also that casualty rates in many of the most mine-affected States have fallen. It is also comforting to note that victim assistance has improved.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our support for the United Nations and restate Tanzania's belief that it is the only universal forum for charting the best course towards our goals and objectives. Let us, therefore, all work together to advance the goals that we collectively subscribe to in the search for international peace, security and development.

Mr. Sun Suon (Cambodia): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Cambodia, may I join previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this

Committee. My felicitations are also extended to the members of the Bureau.

My delegation wishes also to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his statement.

Cambodia aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Myanmar speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

The debate on the issues of disarmament and global security, at the beginning of this century, continues to be among the highest priorities on the United Nations agenda. Although the world community has made great efforts towards identifying the issues concerned and seeking common ground in gradually developing the disarmament process, the path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons is still elusive. While the international community has intensified efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, military expenditure has continued to grow, along with a global sense of insecurity. The United Nations continues to face complex challenges in pursuit of its goal of enhancing peace and international security.

The continued existence of wars and conflicts that plague many parts of the world remains a matter of great focus and preoccupation for the world community. In addition, the magnitude of the damage and devastation caused by the unprecedented terrorist attacks, which are unjustifiable, has drawn our deep concern to the newest and gravest challenges to peace and international security. Once again, to the host country, the families of the victims and other nations that lost citizens, we offer our deepest sympathy. The work of our Committee must certainly take on ever greater significance in challenging this new type of unconventional threat to mankind, given the new context created by these horrendous attacks.

In this regard, I fully concur with the view of the Secretary-General, complemented by you, Mr. Chairman, that these cruel and violent events make the work of the United Nations for peace, disarmament, non-proliferation and security more important than ever. We must stand in unity and strive to strengthen closer cooperation among nations and restrain any possible threats of terrorism by the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We must also resolve to work towards achieving universality of the relevant treaties.

The delegation of Cambodia is of the view that in the post-cold-war era, a strategic vision on disarmament matters based on mutual arrangements should reflect a new reality where humanity as a whole is concentrating its efforts on advancing its global agenda for peace, development and social progress. We anticipate that the recent dialogue between the major Powers on a number of disarmament issues, in particular on national missile defence, will diminish their differences and pave the way towards maintaining global peace and stability. While looking forward to that progress, Cambodia stresses the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), which plays a crucial role in ensuring strategic stability in the current nuclear arms control regime. We look forward to the implementation of START II, in the hope and expectation that negotiations on START III will commence very soon.

Cambodia is pleased to take note of the successful conclusion, last year, of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We believe that the new package of undertakings adopted by consensus at the Conference constitutes a milestone in the pursuit of enhancing and reinvigorating the NPT review process. As a party to the NPT, Cambodia welcomes that positive outcome, in the expectation that the reaffirmation by States with nuclear capacity of their commitment to article VI will be translated into concrete action. We stress the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Conference and of achieving the universality of the NPT in effectively ensuring disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, its entry into force still remains an important political challenge. As a State party to the CTBT, Cambodia joins the international community's efforts to bring the Treaty into force. We are pleased with the progress made so far by the CTBT Organization, which is evident in the increase in the number of parties to the Treaty, particularly among nuclear Powers. In the light of the overwhelming interest, we therefore call upon those countries, in particular the nuclear-capable States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, to do so as a matter of

priority in the interest of the practical attainment of the objectives of the Treaty.

Since the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty — the object of much concern — have reached a stalemate, my delegation would like to encourage the States members of the Conference on Disarmament to resume substantive negotiations on such a treaty, which would be an important step towards compliance with provisions of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference.

In the light of the progress made in negotiations on a draft protocol on verification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), we look forward to the fifth review of the BWC, to take place in November this year. We stress also the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its significant role in the elimination of the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

In the context of small arms, the delegation of Cambodia shares the grave concern expressed by the world community at the excessive accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons spread throughout many parts of the world. Having gone through its own experience, Cambodia fully recognizes the devastating consequences of weapons of that kind, which cripple a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic development efforts. The lack of a framework of binding norms and global standards to curb the illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons is of great concern; this is something which the world community must continue to address in the decades ahead.

The struggle against the illicit proliferation of small arms requires international cooperation. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which we consider as the first, most important step taken by the world community to address that important issue. Although the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference did not fully meet expectations, it nonetheless provides guidelines for practical action by the international community at the national, regional and global levels. For our part, we would like to reaffirm our full cooperation to make the world a more secure and safer place.

Over the years, Cambodia has been making strides in the struggle against the proliferation of small arms. Its achievements to date indicate that 50 per cent of the more than 111,000 units of collected weapons and associated ammunition of all kinds have been destroyed in public ceremonies under the slogan "Flames for peace".

As a country that has suffered a great deal from landmines, Cambodia attaches great importance to that particular issue. The escalating number of cases of the proliferation and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines around the globe demands global attention. Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, we have noted with interest the progressive steps taken by the world community in the fight against landmines. We are also pleased to note the outcome of the recent Third Meeting of States Parties, which took place in September at Managua, particularly with regard to the adoption of a number of measures and recommendations with a view to implementing the relevant articles of the Convention. We observe with satisfaction the progress made so far, especially with respect to efforts by countries to deal with the elimination of anti-personnel landmines, including the reduction of mine accidents and a decrease in the number of mine producers. In spite of some achievements, however, we believe that landmines continue to threaten many countries and people throughout the world and undermine their efforts to achieve economic and development progress. Hence, continued assistance and increased financial support are needed to further tackle these humanitarian problems.

The landmine issue is one of the topmost priorities on the national agenda of the Royal Government. Although progress has been made, our pursuit of the eradication of anti-personnel mines remains essential, with the continued assistance so generously provided by the world community. We believe that the universality of the Convention will effectively contribute to the elimination of these cowardly weapons.

Cambodia constantly supports initiatives undertaken at the regional and subregional levels towards disarmament and to promote security and confidence-building measures among States and within regions. We believe that transparency in armaments and conventional arms reductions would further strengthen those initiatives. As a member of the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Cambodia remains

committed to helping promote confidence-building among the Forum's member States for the sake of peace and stability. This year, as part of our contribution to that effort, Cambodia joined the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In February of this year, with assistance from Canada and Japan, Cambodia organized an ASEAN Regional Forum seminar on conventional weapons transfers as a contribution to the process of promoting confidence-building measures in the region. We also published a white paper on national defence, which reflects the defence policies and strategies of Cambodia to that purpose.

We welcome efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world as a contribution to the enhancement of global peace and international security. As a State member of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-weapon-free Zone — the so-called Bangkok Treaty — we take note of the recent consultations held at Hanoi in May this year, which related to the process of negotiations between ASEAN and nuclear Powers. We urge continued process with a view to the accession by all nuclear Powers to the Protocol of the Bangkok Treaty.

The international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda remains both long and challenging. To complete it, we need moral and political will by all States, based on a culture of peace. The nuclear Powers must take leadership in advancing the cause of disarmament issues — not by word, but by deed.

In the light of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration adopted last year by our leaders, we urge all Member States to undertake continued negotiations within the framework of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, leading to total nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. That stems not only from moral but from legal aspects of our obligations, which have been duly enshrined in the Charter and which were unanimously endorsed in the July 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Cambodia supports the proposed convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament, which we consider to be a unique multilateral forum, should resume its negotiations to overcome the paralysis it is facing and should function adequately through a comprehensive programme of work to be established on the relevant disarmament agenda.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate that Cambodia is committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Its commitment to general and total disarmament stems not only from its adherence to international treaties, but also from its constitutional obligations — which it abides by faithfully — to join the global efforts aimed at ensuring security and peace throughout the world.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to tell you, Sir, how happy my delegation and I are to see you presiding over the First Committee. Your experience in disarmament and your recognized skills augur well for a satisfactory outcome to our work. To you and the other members of the Bureau, we extend our warm congratulations. We must mention also the outstanding qualities of your predecessor, Ambassador Mya Than, whose work at the head of the Committee during its fifty-fifth session was unanimously hailed. Finally, we are grateful to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement and his clarifications.

Of course, as we have done on numerous occasions, we express once again our condolences to the delegation of the United States following the tragedy of 11 September — one month ago.

Taking up the subject of our debate, we should immediately make it clear that my delegation is in solidarity with the statements made by South Africa, on behalf of the non-aligned countries, and by Mali, on behalf of the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The end of the cold war could have led us to believe that an ultimate settlement of the issue of disarmament would be reached. Such is not the case. Indeed, on the contrary, and paradoxically, the resulting unipolarity seems even to have given a renewed impetus to the possession of strike forces, including nuclear, for since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the club of nuclear-weapon countries, far from shrinking, has dangerously expanded.

There is therefore now an imperative need to achieve a just solution to this issue. To this end — like other countries — Burkina Faso has set itself the

objective of general and complete disarmament under international control — an objective that should be pursued using a carefully balanced approach, accompanied by consistent measures.

It is clear, however, that initiatives to achieve general and complete disarmament can only succeed in a calm international climate conducive to confidence — in other words, one in which there is respect for commitments resulting from international agreements and arrangements. That atmosphere of calm — this must be both emphasized and deplored — is far from a reality, given the present international situation. Indeed, various aspects of disarmament have still not been resolved, and therefore cause great concern.

The spread of small arms and light weapons, despite the measures taken by Governments, has been on the rise, in particular in Africa, and therefore has been threatening the stability of States themselves. It is regrettable, that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons ran up against such basic problems as the sale of arms to groups that are not recognized by States.

The control of anti-personnel mines is also a critical issue. For example, in many developing countries, mines are a hindrance to farming and many other socio-economic activities.

I return to the issue of nuclear weapons, where the present state of affairs cannot dispel our fears. The hopes raised by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) have virtually disappeared, in view of the stated intention of certain States parties to renounce it. Implementation of the START process has become bogged down, and implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has made no more progress. The same is true of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), despite the decisions taken at the 2000 Review Conference.

As for the Conference on Disarmament, it has made no progress for several years now, being unable to adopt an agenda that will permit an effective start to its work.

We can therefore note that the overall situation is discouraging.

The potential solutions to this negative trend include — and this is essential — strengthening the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, in particular the Centre in Togo, which covers the West African region. While we welcome the creation of these Centres, whose usefulness has been proved, we are concerned to see that they function properly. We therefore urge the international community to give them the necessary resources.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that Burkina Faso will continue to join in United Nations efforts within the framework of measures planned to settle the issue of disarmament. Action has already been taken to harmonize national legislation with those treaties to which Burkina Faso is a party.

Moreover, as one of the non-aligned countries, Burkina Faso fully supports the appeal of the Non-Aligned Movement for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We hope that this conference — urgently needed now, more than ever — will lead to measures that will ultimately limit and, we hope, totally eliminate arms.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): My delegation, like others, congratulates you, Sir, very sincerely on your appointment as Chairman of this Committee. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

Let me reiterate Australia's deep sympathy and solidarity with all those who suffered as a result of the atrocious terrorist attacks on 11 September. As these tragic events have demonstrated so dramatically, threats to international peace and security are not limited to wars between States, nor indeed to the kinds of dangers that existing arms control and disarmament mechanisms have sought to address. However, this should not discourage our multilateral efforts to promote peace and security. Rather, these terrible acts should serve as a catalyst for a renewed commitment by the international community to enhance cooperation, by strengthening existing multilateral mechanisms and by devising effective ways to address new security challenges.

The terrorist attacks in the United States have provoked speculation about the possible use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by a terrorist group. We can no longer assume that terrorist groups are not prepared to use such weapons. As the Secretary-General outlined in his address on 1 October, there is much United Nations Member States can do, collectively and individually, to prevent any future

terrorist attacks from being carried out with weapons of mass destruction.

The threat posed by nuclear weapons is not new, but there is a lot of work still to be done in preventing their spread and working towards their elimination. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the foundation for these efforts. The outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference was a significant step forward. It is important that we now work towards a successful 2005 NPT Review Conference that will involve a fair and balanced review across the range of NPT activities.

Since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, some impatience has been expressed about the rate of progress in implementing the Conference outcome. Yet we should not disregard the significant progress achieved to date in the reduction of nuclear arsenals, although this progress may not have been entirely uniform. The 2005 NPT Review Conference will again provide an important opportunity for the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate commitment to meeting their article VI obligations and the undertakings given at the 2000 Review Conference.

But the task is not one for the nuclear-weapon States alone. It is equally important that non-nuclear-weapon States — and for that matter States outside the NPT — contribute to a climate conducive to nuclear arms reductions by reinforcing the non-proliferation regime; more so given that the terrorist atrocities we have witnessed could one day involve weapons of mass destruction.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is, of course, another key element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. The coming CTBT article XIV Conference is an opportunity for the international community to send a strong message of support for the Treaty.

It is disappointing the Treaty is not yet in force. But with 161 signatories and 79 ratifiers, there should be no doubt that the CTBT has firmly established a powerful international norm against nuclear testing. Australia encourages all ratifiers to consider what action they might take to promote the CTBT's entry into force. Australia, for example, recently made a further round of diplomatic representations to Asia-Pacific countries and annex 2 countries whose ratification is required for entry into force, and we will continue our efforts to this end. We once again urge those yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. Until the Treaty enters into force, the existing moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is one of the most urgent disarmament and non-proliferation steps the international community should take, as reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We are deeply disappointed that another Conference on Disarmament ended this year without a start to cut-off negotiations, despite the efforts of several States to build support for negotiations. In this regard, in May this year, Australia co-sponsored, with Japan, a workshop on the role and significance of the cut-off treaty. Prior to the start of formal negotiations, Australia sees value in further informal work along these lines outside the Conference on Disarmament. Pending negotiation of a cut-off treaty, we call upon all relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Universal implementation of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is another key non-proliferation priority. Achieving this objective would substantially boost the mutual confidence-building essential for national, regional and international security. It would contribute significantly to a climate favourable to further cuts in nuclear arms. We are pleased to have been the first country to ratify and implement an additional protocol and urge all States yet to take this important step to do so as quickly as possible. Australia is helping a number of regional countries to ratify and implement additional protocols.

Australia remains strongly committed to the global bans on chemical and biological weapons. The practical and normative value of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is clear. The moral and political force of the CWC will be enhanced by the full implementation and universalization of the Treaty. Australia urges countries which have not signed or ratified the CWC to do so as soon as possible. It is vital also that the OPCW function in an effective manner. Australia is committed to working with the Director General and other States parties to resolve the OPCW's current financial and administrative problems. Reforms must be carried through effectively, and the Organization's core verification activities must be preserved.

We are disappointed that a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has not been achieved after more than six years of negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group. Australia strongly supported the Chairman's composite text as a valuable, if imperfect, means of strengthening the BWC. In our view, the draft protocol would have provided security benefits for all. Now, it is vital that momentum towards strengthening the BWC be renewed, and this must begin at the Fifth BWC Review Conference in November. Australia urges all States to enhance their efforts to strengthen the BWC with practical and effective international measures.

There remains much to be done, but we should not forget that the past year has seen some notable achievements. Australia welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held earlier this year. The Programme of Action includes 85 practical measures for addressing the problems posed by small arms. We must now fully implement the Programme. Australia's efforts will focus on encouraging implementation of the Programme in our own region. A key objective will be to support the development of model legislation for a common approach to weapons control in the South Pacific, and to continue to provide practical assistance to facilitate more effective control over weapons stockpiles.

Australia also welcomes the strong growth in the number of States which have joined the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines over the past year. We remain firmly committed to the universalization of the Convention and are working closely with States parties and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to promote the Convention, with a particular focus on the South-East Asian region. As the deadline for stockpile destruction draws near for many countries, we will also be working as co-chair of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction to support this important obligation under the Convention.

Australia is pleased — indeed, proud — that its Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Luck, my colleague in Geneva, has been nominated as President-designate of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held in Geneva in December this year. We welcome the progress made at the three meetings of the Preparatory Commission and look forward to working cooperatively with all States parties at the Review Conference as we consider a range of proposals to strengthen, or build on, the Convention's existing provisions. Australia is committed to the universalization of the CCW and calls on all those countries which have yet to accede to the Convention and its protocols to take the opportunity of the Review Conference to do so.

The spread of technology associated with the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction also threatens security. Australia shares the view that the proliferation of missiles, in particular long-range missiles capable of delivering weapons-of-mass-destruction payloads, is inherently destabilizing for regional and global security.

Australia strongly supports the adoption by the international community of an International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We are pleased to be associated with the development of an augmented draft Code at the recent Missile Technology Control Regime meeting in Ottawa. The Code represents a genuine effort to increase transparency in relation to missile activities and to build confidence regarding the peaceful intentions of States. The Code will now be circulated among the international community for further negotiation and finalization ahead of a proposed adoption conference in late 2002. We urge all States to subscribe to the Code as an important signal of the international community's commitment to ballistic missile non-proliferation. As a participant in the United Nations panel of experts on missiles, Australia is also working in that forum to develop practical recommendations to guide the international community's efforts to combat proliferation.

Australia, like all nations, was shocked by the events of 11 September. In the face of threats to international security, our communities need to know that Governments are cooperating to protect them. It is vital, therefore, that our multilateral institutions work well and that international arms control and non-proliferation efforts continue to contribute to global and regional stability and security.

In a time of uncertainty, we must not falter. In this Committee we must be guided by the goal of mobilizing international support for practical measures to address existing, new and emerging threats to

security. The Australian delegation looks forward to supporting you, Mr. Chairman, and working with other delegations to this end.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your election to the presidency of the Committee, and congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Rest assured that the delegation of Paraguay will make every effort to help you to ensure the success of our important work.

First, my delegation fully endorses the statement made by Ambassador Valdés, the Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group.

The events of 11 September warned us most tragically that the fight against terrorism must be one of the greatest priorities of the international community, and therefore of this Organization, without the other issues on our agenda being neglected. On the occasion of the examination in plenary of item 166 of the agenda, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", Paraguay vigorously expressed its condemnation of all acts that threaten international peace and security, wherever they originate, called on all members of the international community to find a sure response in confronting and eradicating terrorism, dedicating all efforts to taking effective collective measures to prevent and eradicate threats to peace, as stated in our Charter.

The delegation of Paraguay reaffirms this position and underlines the urgent need to take measures to control and eradicate any element that imperils peace and security or could be used to perpetrate terrorist attacks. In these last few days, we have observed with concern that conventional arms are already within the reach of terrorists and that they do not hesitate to use them in pursuing their ominous goals.

We must redouble our efforts to control the proliferation of conventional weapons. But at the same time, we must not lose sight of the great risks posed by the possibility that terrorists might use weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, employed as elements of terror, creating an almost unthinkable scenario. Therefore, the strengthening of the legal framework that must control the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons is of the greatest urgency and necessity for the international community.

It is of fundamental importance that we strengthen the multilateral legal framework that regulates the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, we reiterate the need for States to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we draw attention to the upcoming Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty. I can report here that Paraguay, for its part, recently ratified this all-important multilateral instrument. In the coming days, it will deposit its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General.

Similarly, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, another essential international agreement to which Paraguay is also party, must be acceded to by the international community. In the regional sphere, Paraguay has always taken part in all the discussions on actions to maintain peace and security. One sign of that is the Republic of Paraguay being a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We also believe in the need to achieve as quickly as possible universal adhesion to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

At the same time, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons worries the Government of Paraguay. In this respect, a draft bill was presented in the National Congress to regulate the importing and exporting of these weapons, establishing punishments for perpetrators of illicit activities. However, there is in effect now an executive order which fixes norms for the acquisition, manufacture, possession, transportation and all legal acts related to firearms, gun powder, explosives and like materials.

In this respect, I wish to emphasize that Paraguay does not produce arms, and that since 1997 it has gradually but substantially reduced its imports of firearms and munitions for civilian use, reaching by this year a level of zero per cent imports.

Finally, Paraguay express its firm will to continue cooperating with the efforts to prevent, combat and totally eliminate anything that puts at risk the well-being of the peoples, their social and economic development and their right to live in peace.

Mr. Onobu (Nigeria): At the start, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We are confident that under your guidance, our Committee will achieve its set objectives at this session of the General Assembly.

First, I wish to express the heartfelt sympathy of the delegation of Nigeria to the Government and people of our host country over the tragic events of 11 September 2001. We reaffirm our support for the resolutions that have been passed so far by the United Nations condemning this vile act.

Given the callousness of this heinous crime and the continuing menace of terrorism, it has become particularly urgent to give effect to the commitment of Member States, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The events of the past few weeks have clearly underscored the grave danger humanity faces if terrorists were to gain access to nuclear as well as chemical and biological weapons.

My delegation therefore believes that one area in which the world has to speak with one voice and act in concert is disarmament and international security. In the broad spectrum of the challenges faced by humanity, such as global epidemics, regional conflicts, poverty, racism and terrorism, the existence of weapons of mass destruction poses the greatest threat to human survival. Unfortunately, the disarmament and security challenges we face today have not diminished, as commitments have remained largely unmet.

A year after the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), during which the nuclear-weapon States gave an unequivocal commitment to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals, no progress has been recorded. It will be recalled that a series of practical measures was agreed upon with the goal of making systematic and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament. Some of the measures include: pledges of no first use of nuclear weapons between nuclear-weapon States; legally binding security assurances of non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; and cancellation of the nuclear weapon state of alert and the separation of nuclear war heads from their delivery systems. It is our hope that some of those measures can still be effected before our next preparatory meeting, to be held in 2002.

We note with concern the growing controversy surrounding the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems. We are of the view that the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) is important for the promotion and maintenance of international stability. We also believe that it offers a basis for future reductions in offensive strategic weapons. We therefore appeal to all States to refrain from taking measures that could trigger a new arms race.

Nigeria has always been in the forefront of the opposition to nuclear tests. As far back as the early 1960s, we opposed the nuclear tests then being conducted in the Sahara. We have ever since remained committed to the comprehensive ban of all forms of testing. We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards are integral pillars sustaining the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime of the NPT. We believe that the CTBT provides a credible framework for securing the world against the threat of nuclear weapons.

As an earnest of Nigeria's irrevocable commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world, President Olusegun Obasanjo signed the CTBT in the course of the Millennium Summit last year. We have also signed the instrument of ratification, which has been deposited with the Secretary-General. Nigeria is thus prepared to cooperate with the provisional secretariat of the CTBT Organization to achieve the early entry into force of the Treaty. In that regard, we would like to urge all States, especially those States whose ratification is required for the entry into force of the Treaty, to make a concerted effort to ratify it.

Nigeria's non-proliferation credentials include the signing and ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have also signed the instrument of accession to the Anti-personnel Mines Convention and have ratified the African Nuclear-weapon-free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba. In ratifying the Pelindaba Treaty, we have reaffirmed our belief that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important disarmament measure that promotes regional peace and security in the world.

The existence of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone reflects the resolve of the States of the region to achieve the goals not only of regional peace but also of

legitimate access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We therefore urge Member States which have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so to make possible its early entry into force. We support the initiative to strengthen similar regimes in the regions of the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok. It is our hope that the efforts to establish a similar zone in Central Asia will soon be realized.

Nigeria wishes to draw attention to the inherent dangers posed to Member States by the transboundary movement and the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes. Concerned at the growing incidence of that phenomenon, my delegation worked for the Organization of African Unity's adoption in 1988 of a resolution on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste. In the light of the persistence of that problem, the African Group will again submit a draft resolution on it at this session of the General Assembly.

Coming from a region that has experienced the devastation that small-arms-induced conflicts have wreaked on our societies, Nigeria believes that the July United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects could not have taken place at a more opportune time. The convening of the Conference was an acknowledgement of the often devastating impact of small arms and light weapons on the well-being of many developing countries. It was also an affirmation of the desire of the international community to deal with the problem of the growing illicit trade in those weapons. The outcome document of the July Conference on small arms and light weapons contained elements which underscored the determination of the international community to deal, at all levels, with the dangers posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

My delegation would like to underscore the importance of the call on the international community to render technical and financial assistance to regional and national efforts aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We also support the call for the creation of a small arms fund to assist States in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference. We also wish to support the call for a review conference in 2006 and for biennial meetings of States to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Clearly, the need for a legally binding instrument to deal with the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons cannot be overemphasized. We remain convinced of the need to prohibit the sale and transfer of small arms and light weapons to so-called non-State actors. Given the clear correlation that exists between the proliferation and accumulation of small arms and light weapons on the one hand and the increasing incidence of conflict situations and crime on the other, we are of the view that the availability of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors further escalates the instability of many developing countries. There is therefore a need for the international community to deal urgently with this matter.

In conclusion, my delegation appeals to all Member States to muster the political will to fulfil their obligations under the various disarmament treaties and conventions, so as to create and sustain a stable and safer world.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Since I have heard so many assurances of full cooperation with the Chair from most, if not all, of the delegations in this room, here is a moment when we can actually translate this into concrete action. If members look at the speakers list for tomorrow and for next week, which will be the last week devoted to the general debate on all items, they will see that tomorrow, Friday, 12 October, we have seven speakers; next Monday we have eight speakers; on Tuesday we have seven; on Wednesday we have nine; and on Thursday we have eight. Friday, 19 October, seems to be clear.

Since I believe we can accommodate 10 or 11 speakers per meeting, it would definitely be advisable and very useful if delegations whose names are inscribed on the list of speakers — including on Thursday, 18 October, which is scheduled to be the very last day of general debate — would consider making their statements at an earlier date so that consultations among delegations could take place not only on Friday, 19 October, but also on Thursday, 18 October, in view of the next phase of our work in the First Committee, which, as delegations may remember, will be devoted to thematic discussions and the presentation of drafts.

It would be good and, I believe, useful, if we had two days at our disposal before beginning the thematic discussion and the presentation of drafts. That would

allow us to gain full knowledge of where we stood. Delegations could consult each other on common language and common understandings during those days, which could be at our disposal. I believe that there should be a two-way street. I am therefore asking delegations to take the initiative to look at their schedules and think about making their statements at an earlier time. At the same time, the Secretariat will be checking with those delegations concerned so as to find out whether they can actually do that. I ask delegations to help me in this way. In so doing, they will be helping the First Committee to expedite its work — or, rather, to make full use of time that is available to it in the light of the more critical period that is coming to haunt us next week. I hope that delegations will try not to forget my humble appeal.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.